

## The most beautiful place in the world is decorated with 220 species of charming butterflies

Vladimir Kachan, Belarus

The pearl of Africa - Uganda shines as Bwindi Impenetrable Forest tops the CNN 25 most beautiful places in the world list. A UNESCO world heritage site once again was recognized for what it is, an incredibly beautiful place that is beyond compare, that mere words cannot do justice as to what awaits a visitor to the ancient rainforest. There is the outer beauty, the scenery of ridges, mist-covered almost mystical valleys. There is also the inner beauty, what the forest contains, half of the mountain gorillas in the world, rare species of birds, butterflies the size of birds (Figure 1), forest elephants, chameleon, and other creatures of the day and night.



Figure 1: Stamp of Uganda 1984 (Scott #428) depicts the butterfly *Papilio lormieri* with wingspan up to 12 cm

Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest has been ranked by CNN in 2019 as the world's most beautiful place. It is located in south-western Uganda in the Kanungu District. The hillsides which are mist-covered are sheltered by one of the ancient and very biologically varied rainforests in Uganda that dates back to more than 25,000 years, comprising of about 400 varied plant species. The forest with a national park designated as a UNESCO world heritage site is a habitat for 120 species of mammals, 348 species of birds, 27 species of frogs, chameleons, geckos, and many other endangered species. Here, the

most seasoned of nature-lovers will be amazed by the dazzling colours of Bwindi's 220 butterfly species (Figure 2).

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Reserve was gazetted in the year of 1942 and later in 1992 it was upgraded to the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and in 1994 it was recognized as a World Heritage Site in Uganda. In local language (Lukiga), Bwindi actually means 'Impenetrable.' This repeated warning is apt, for Bwindi is all however impenetrable; 331 km<sup>2</sup> of tangled plant life draped over a deeply fissured landscape of steep, slippery valleys & high, draughty ridges. Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is among the most stunning rainforests anyone will ever come across.

The park is also among the most diverse forests in East Africa, with more than 1,000 flowering plant species, including 163 species of trees and 104 species of ferns. Away from wildlife, the rugged terrain of Bwindi and its dense forests also make the park a spectacular place to visit especially by adventure-loving travelers. Wildlife walks don't come more fascinating than a trip into Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, where you can get up close

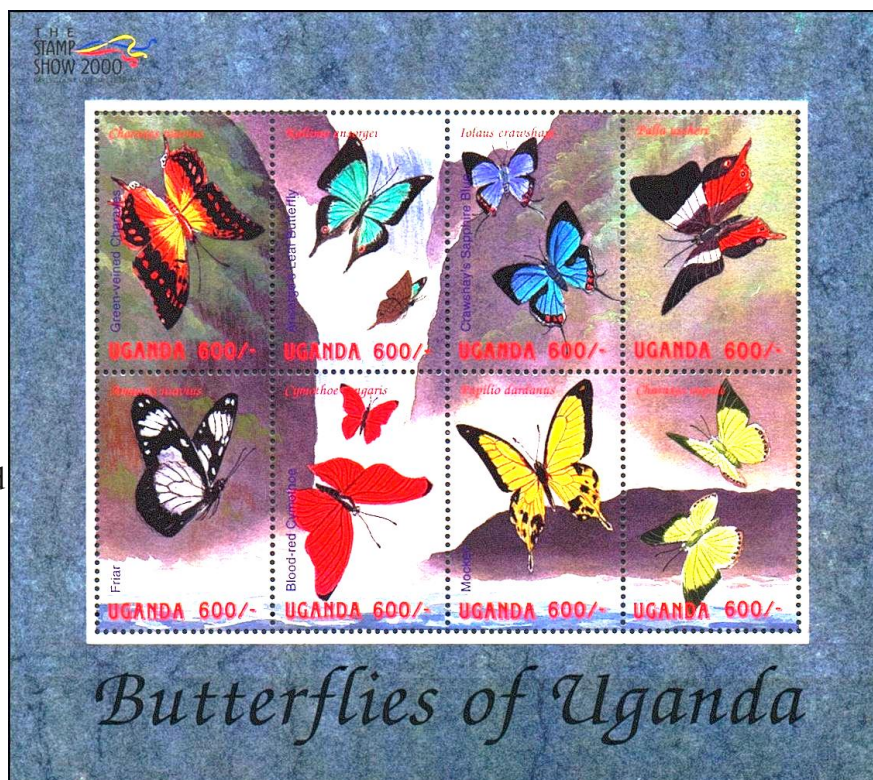


Figure 2: Miniature sheet of Uganda 2000 (Scott #1650) with montane forest butterflies.



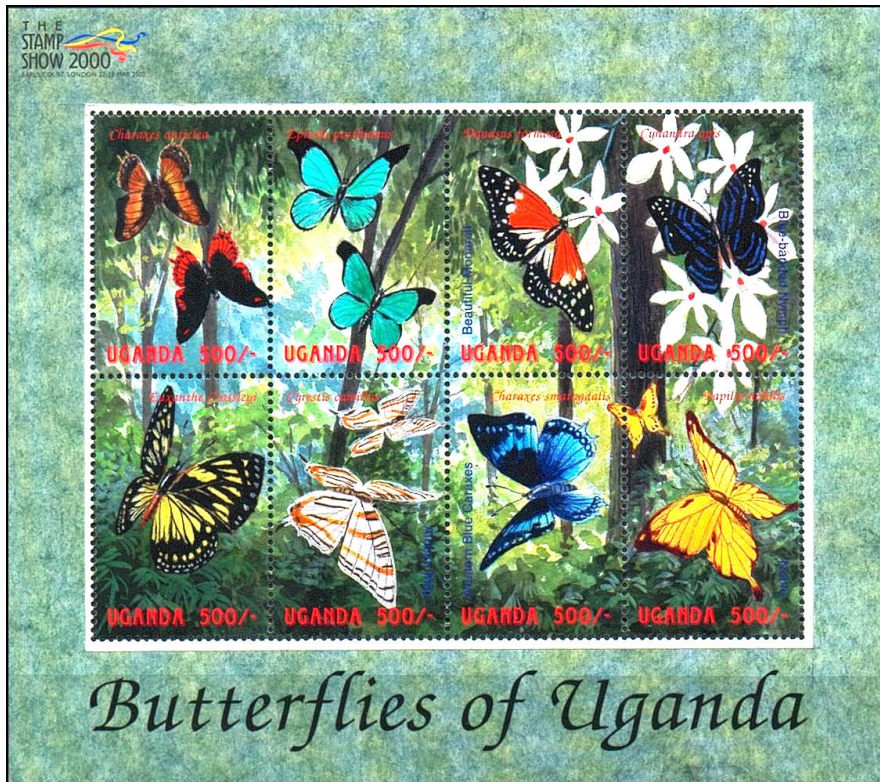


Figure 3 – Miniature sheet of Uganda 2000 (Scott #1649) with fascinating butterflies of Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

and personal with the area's fascinating butterflies (Figure 3). Exploring this national park on a peaceful forest walk uncovers a host of natural treasures. The forest buzzes with birdsong and insects calls, being one of the top butterfly watching sites in Africa with over 220 species, including 8 endemics (Figure 4).

Unique nature provides an attractive feature of the forest with a profusion of tree ferns, orchids and Bwindi's colorful array of butterflies (Figure 5). Overall, Bwindi hosts numerous globally threatened species including butterflies such as Cream-banded swallowtail and African giant swallowtail (Figure 6). Bright butterfly *Euphaedra neophron*, or the gold banded forester, which is found in very dense tropical forests as the



Figure 4: Endemic butterfly *Graphium gudenusi* on the souvenir sheet of Uganda 2000 (Scott #1653).

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

According to CNN, Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is one of the world's spectacular places, full of hidden and overt beauty in every corner that shouldn't miss on a bucket list of one looking for an outstanding adventure on a Uganda Safari.

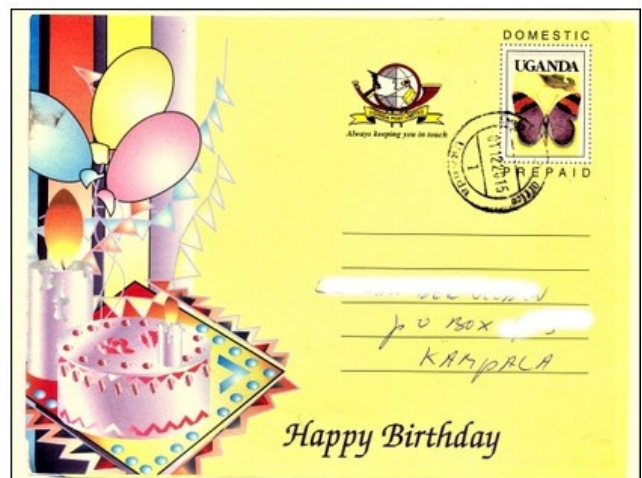


Figure 5: Aerogramme of Uganda 2000 with image of bright butterfly *Euphaedra neophron*, or the gold banded forester, which is found in very dense tropical forests as the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.



Figure 6: Stamp of Uganda 1984 (Scott #429) with the butterfly the African giant swallowtail or *Papilio antiochus*, which listed at IUCN red list as endangered and threatened.

The Author is ready to help philatelists creating philatelic exhibits on butterflies and moths. His address:

Vladimir Kachan, street Kulibina 9-49, Minsk-52, BY-220052, Republic of Belarus.

E-mail: vladimirkachan@mail.ru